

THE BULLETIN'S DAILY STORY A CHRISTMAS VISIT

"I've had an urgent letter from my mother, and she is making me go to her and visit the family for two or three weeks at the Christmas season," said the young man, "and I guess I'll go. They have three or four children and I've never seen them since I was a little boy. I guess I shall have a grand time."

"Well, of course, it's a good thing to visit your mother and father," remarked the hotelkeeper, "but if you take my advice you won't stay more than twenty-four hours. If you just go to her family and shake hands all around, and give the kids some candy and pictures, and then come back again, those young ones will always look upon you as a sort of fairy godfather, and they will be very grateful to you. But if you stay more than two or three weeks they'll also see you as a stuffed prophet and make it a burden to you."

"I have a married daughter of my own, and, by the way, she has several children, and three or four years ago she insisted that I should go to her place and make a good long visit. So I went at Christmas time. My daughter had educated her children, and she was a great and good man, and when I first got there they looked upon me with respect. They called me 'Uncle' and 'Aunt' and I was as much at home as if I had never been away. But after a few days, when I began to talk about my own affairs, and the children began to ask me questions, they began to look upon me as a sort of stuffed prophet, and they were very grateful to me. I always lie down after the midday banquet and take a nap, and my daughter provided a sofa in the sitting room for this function. Well, I must admit that my staying in out of tune, but when I'm at home nobody pays any attention to it. The second day I was at my daughter's I woke up after a few lines of refreshing slumber and found those kids standing around looking at me as a man might look at a pink ostrich in a menagerie. They insisted that I should move some more. It reminded them of their Uncle Andrew's sawmill, they said. Later in the day some visitors dropped in, and I was posing as a distinguished old gentleman of culture and refinement, and those kids began clamoring to have me move again, so the company could hear. I never was up against anything more embarrassing."

"When I first went there they had the idea that a grandfather was a gorgeous sort of individual, superior to ordinary human weaknesses, but my stock slumped like thunder when I had an attack of rheumatism and had to sit around awaiting my fete with a rheumatism. That reminded them that old Gaffer Gummish used to have rheumatism and used to soak himself with liniment, and he went to the poorhouse. Children always associate ideas together in a queer way, deigned them, and those kids came to the conclusion that I was destined for the poorhouse. They expressed their convictions to other children, and those children passed the story along, and so it got to be the talk of the town that I was stopping at my daughter's temporarily, but that I was destined for the poorhouse. When I was taking my afternoon nap they tied a string to my shoes and then fastened it to the chairs and things, and when I got up I upset all the furniture in the room and made such a racket that my daughter came with her seven leagué boots on. When I explained to her what the kids had done she flew up and said I must be in my dotage, for her little darlings wouldn't dream of doing such a thing, she said. I must have tied the string myself."

"I saw that it was time to do a vanishing stunt, so I packed my kit of things and made a dash for home. I did it all right. Had I stayed just one day I'd still be the high man with those kids in Chicago now."

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